

## FAIRIES KEEP CHRISTMAS.

A fairy woke one winter night  
And looked about with glances bright.  
"I think I will arise," she said,  
And leave my comrades in their bed.  
And I will go abroad and see  
How mortals fare." So, full of glee  
At such wild daring, forth she went  
On bold investigation bent.

The air was chill; the moon shone bright  
As ever on a summer night.  
The ground was covered deep with snow,  
And trees stood leafless, row on row.  
And said, "The friends I left behind  
In their deep slumber happier are  
Than I who rashly roam so far."

Yet on she went and sought the town  
And in a mass went up and down—  
Such lights, such music and good cheer,  
As grace no other time of year.  
Such happy faces everywhere,  
Such glad releases from fret and care,  
And homes so garlanded with green,  
As ne'er before the elf had seen!

"I thought the world was dull and drear  
In winter time," she said. "Oh, dear!  
I wish my comrades only knew  
How bright it is, how fresh and new,  
In its white dress; how every street  
Is all alive with bounding feet,  
How people laugh and sing and play—  
It surely is some festive day!"

Through street and house and church and  
She fitted, wondering more and more  
At all she saw and all she heard,  
Hoping for some enlightening word.  
When on a banner carried high  
She saw these words uplifted high:  
"Rejoice, O earth, be glad and gay!  
It is the blessed Christmas day!"

Away she sped o'er town and hill  
And field and wood and frozen rill,  
Unto a cavern warm and deep,  
And woke her comrades from their sleep.  
"Arise!" she cried. "Oh, come away!  
The world is keeping Christmas day!  
And ever since when birth bells chime  
The fairies help keep Christmas time."  
—Lillian Grey in Boston Transcript.

## THE LIGHT IN THE COTTAGE.

"There was a light last night in the  
haunted cottage."

My wife's little mother spoke it with  
shiver and whisper at the breakfast Christ-  
mas morning. ToINETTE and I looked at  
each other as if to ask, "Is her old trouble  
coming back?" She, catching our glances,  
shook her head.

"No, my dears, there's nothing the mat-  
ter with me," answering as if she had read  
our thoughts. "There was a light there,"  
she reiterated. "I heard some one cough.  
There were strokes of a hammer and, a  
little later, a carriage was driven away. I  
saw it go."

She was so decided in voice and manner,  
so different for the moment from her usual  
gentle self, that I felt sure nothing ailed  
her head. We were very watchful of the  
dear old lady because she sometimes—not  
very often—had mild but temporary de-  
lusions. She had never entirely recovered  
from the shock caused by the tragic loss  
of her husband.

"It was Christmas night a year ago,  
John, that you saw a light there," re-  
marked ToINETTE meditatively.

"I have not forgotten it," said I, "nor  
how, when I went to look into the matter,  
I plunged into a man coming down the  
front steps. What followed was something  
like this: 'Beg pardon,' I said. 'Being  
an officer and seeing a light in this empty  
house I thought tramps might have broken  
in.'"

"I'm no tramp," replied the man,  
speaking in a heavy bass voice, as if he  
had a cold.

"It was so odd a thing—"  
"Odd or not," he broke in, "it's my  
house, to do with as I like. What's the  
time, officer? But never mind! Here's my  
carriage. Good night! And he was  
driven away without so much as a glimpse  
of his face."

"Now, I'm not a bit superstitious,"  
mother declared it with a vigor and posi-  
tiveness that permitted no controversy,  
even had we, her children, thought or said  
anything to the contrary—"but it made  
my flesh creep to think of any one being  
alone in that empty, horrible old shell."  
And then you went to bed and cried  
over it half the night," asserted ToINETTE  
reproachfully. "Your eyes ached, I moth-  
er."

"Kill out my memory, daughter, and  
the tears will stop." Her lips quivered as  
she spoke. "You know I can't help it."  
"Yes, I know," and ToINETTE began to  
talk of other matters.

I might as well state right here, so that  
the story may be the better kept together,  
that misfortune had in my case trans-  
formed me from a bookkeeper into a po-  
lice-man, and I had found no way of turn-  
ing myself back again. The station to  
which I was assigned was within five  
minutes' walk of the flat we called home.  
The cottage about which we had been  
talking was a small, one story structure,  
with steps coming directly down to the  
sidewalk in front and with a scrimp,  
weed covered backyard, as if it were a  
refuge patch from some rich man's garden.  
Less than half a dozen years before it had  
been about in the center of a three acre  
tract devoted to "truck gardening," but  
the city had grown out far beyond it and  
was smothering it with great buildings of  
brick and stone. The exterior was kept  
in good condition by paint, but its interior  
condition was unknown, the owner plain-  
ly preferring that the property should re-  
main tenanted. This cottage was directly  
in the rear of our building, facing a par-  
allel street. An alley separated the two  
yards. From our rear windows we could  
look down on the premises, so that it was  
not difficult to notice any unusual happen-  
ing. Among old women and children the  
place had the reputation of being haunted,  
a distinction that seems naturally to be-  
come attached to wornout and unoccupied  
places, and this one had not been lived in  
for many years. For my wife and her  
mother—the latter especially—the cottage  
was the reminder of the saddest period in  
their lives. One Christmas night, just 11  
years before, the husband and father,  
David Vance, seized by the palsy of a friend  
and reduced to a condition of starvation, went  
out of that cottage into the blinding fury  
of a snowstorm and was not seen or heard  
of again. His family had afterward drifted  
around, being sometimes in one city,  
sometimes in another, until they had un-  
wittingly come back to within a stone's  
throw of the birthplace of their bitterest  
recollection.

After the family had left the cottage the  
story ran that a subsequent tenant had  
murdered his wife there and that it was  
haunted—not by the ghost of the slain, but  
by that of the slayer, who had been duly

and properly executed, and that for this  
reason no tenant would take the house at  
any rent. Still another legend, picked up  
by me in conversation with "old settlers,"  
and considered from a professional point  
of view, was to the effect that the present  
owner was a man beyond middle age who  
had been disappointed in love, the object  
of his affection being the daughter of the  
woman who had been murdered, and that he  
came to the house every little while, like  
one to the tomb of his departed, to mourn  
over his loss, the girl having considerably  
married the man she loved. It will be ob-  
served that the little house seemed the  
nucleus of several tragedies, real or unreal,  
and therefore became an uncanny spot to  
the superstitiously inclined. Community  
of houses, like a community of persons,  
seems necessarily to cover disreputable con-  
stituents, and the cottage, from its mean-  
ness of appearance and its unpleasant an-  
tecedents, looked more disreputable than  
any of its neighbors, and seemed, therefore,  
always an object of suspicion.

The light of the Christmas day had blend-  
ed with the darkness of the Christmas  
night. I had traveled my beat as in duty  
bound. Our dinner had been eaten and  
all evidence that it had existed removed  
with housewife's skill and care. Frank,  
ToINETTE's big brother, had gone out for a  
mile walk, "to shake down his food," as  
he said. ToINETTE was reading to me, half  
dozing in a chair, and the clock had just  
struck the half hour after 8 when mother,  
with an unnatural excitement in look and  
action, came into the room.

"It's there!" she cried, breathing hard,  
her hand over her heart. "I've been  
watching for it. Somehow I felt sure that  
whoever was there last night would come  
again tonight, just as last year."

"What is the matter, mother?" said my  
wife, running up to her. "You frighten  
me."

"There, there, daughter. I didn't mean  
to scare you, but it excites me so to see a  
quiet thing like yellow light looking out  
between the blind slats of that empty  
house that I suppose I show my feelings."

ToINETTE's forehead had two up and  
down wrinkles between her eyebrows as  
she looked at me with a hard stare. Then  
she spoke:

"John Anstee—dear John—you're big  
and ain't afraid of ghosts, and are a po-  
lice-man besides. Now go down to that  
shanty and find out what's inside. It will  
relieve mother's mind so."

I started on duty, but an officer of the  
law ought always to be on duty is the way  
I look at it. So I got my work clothes on,  
put my star where I could show it easily  
and went away with the laughing threat  
of arresting the ghost.

Somebody or something was in the old  
house, sure enough. Threads of yellow  
light around the windows proved it. I  
pushed softly at the door of the little lean  
to in the rear. It noiselessly swung open,  
letting me into as mean and squalid a  
kitchen as I ever saw or heard of. It  
wasn't much bigger than a large closet.  
The stove was cold and rusty. Its front  
door was broken and hung by one hinge.  
The griddles had pieces knocked out of  
them. Only one pot or kettle was visible.

Two panes of glass were gone from the  
one window, and rags were stuffed into the  
holes, the tight wooden shutters hiding  
them from outside view. A tallow candle,  
stuck in its own grease to the bottom of a  
ruined saucer, gave a swirling, smoky  
flame, by which I saw a few bits of dilapi-  
dated crockery on a shelf. The table was  
an inverted dry goods box, from which  
pieces had been broken for fuel. Great  
heavens! Into what a nesting place of  
poverty had I stolen my way! What did  
this opening scene promise?

My entrance had noiselessly forced open,  
just a hair's breadth, the door to the adjoin-  
ing room. Blowing out the candle, I en-  
larged the opening until my eye could take  
in the contents of the apartment. The first  
look showed a gray haired man seated at a  
table, his arms upon it and his head upon  
his arms. I was directly behind him, and  
my glances took in the length of the little  
room. Such a room and such a table! The  
plastering had dropped off the ceiling and  
sides, leaving ulcerous looking spots.  
What remained was of a dirty, gray color  
and a network of cracks. The lath showed  
like the ribs of a skeleton.

The table was covered with a cloth,  
clean, but porous with holes and fringed  
with tatters. In the center was a little  
kerosene lamp of glass, whose wick was  
so small as to afford little more than a  
faint sort of glow, but it was enough to  
show a plate holding six potatoes with  
their jackets on and a half loaf of bread.  
Three plates turned down, three tumblers  
of water and knives and forks at each  
place, added to those articles which the  
man had pushed aside, were all the table  
held. Three vacant chairs, one at each  
plate, were notices of expected guests.  
There was no stove, and the air came cold  
and musty into my face through the crev-  
ice of the door. Warmly dressed though I  
was, I shivered with a dread that I was  
looking at the phantom of the dead mur-  
derer or at the real and crazed lover or at  
a tramp making a mockery of his Christ-  
mas dinner. The bowed down figure sud-  
denly shook as with an ague. A groan  
came from it. A minute more the man  
was sitting stiffly erect, staring at the ta-  
ble and muttering and sighing.

Very real, but very crazy, he seemed.  
None the less when, rising to his feet, he  
became a figure of magnificent man-  
hood—gray topped, but tall, muscular and  
dignified—soldier in looks, even to the  
trimming of the heavy white mustache.  
His clothing was black, and not a glint of  
ornament was visible. What had this  
grand looking old man to do with this  
place of chilling misery? He was its foe  
by dress and bearing. Its unspeakable  
poverty made it his enemy.

He walked the room with long strides  
and heavy footfalls, the floor creaking and  
groaning under his weight. There was no  
cessation of his talking to himself until,  
plunging his hands on the back of his chair,  
he halted and looked across the table at  
the vacant chairs. Then his mutterings  
changed to a loud tirade of self denuncia-  
tions.

"This is the fifth time I have set this  
table and sat at it alone," he said. "Where  
are you, my loved ones? If you are dead,  
I pray God that your spirits may come and  
see my grief and shame and learn of my  
penitence. If you are dead, then I mur-  
dered you. I am a criminal, whether you  
are alive or dead. I am so guilty that I  
would not dare to tell the world of my  
cowardly act. For years I've here done  
penance on Christmas nights. This mis-  
erable but is mine—my chapel of con-  
fession, my place of self-punishment. What  
good is all my wealth if you are not with  
me to share it? Guilty coward that I was  
to flee from you! Money has not been  
lacking to find and restore you to me.  
Perhaps you started to death and lie in  
the potter's field. If you are living, it  
must be that you remember me only with  
curses. I deserve them—indeed I do."

Then sinking on his knees he said:  
"Good Lord, hear my prayer! Give me  
back my loved ones! I have come to this

spot from the ends of the earth year after  
year that my past may never be forgotten  
by me. I ought to be dead, but I dare not  
die. I shall taste tonight of such food as  
we eat at such nights. All that we had,  
I would give up all my riches if I might eat  
it with my loved ones, but it is not to be  
—not to be."

His chin came down upon his breast.  
He was a statue of despair. Clearly to me  
he was also crazy. He would have been  
considered so by any man in my place.  
Plainly enough he had worked himself  
into a frenzy and at that moment was suf-  
fering from a reaction. While he was in  
that mood and I was wondering what to  
do with him or for him there was a flash  
of light, a touch on my arm and a whis-  
pered:

"John, what is the matter?" It was  
ToINETTE, with my bulleye lantern.

"You were so long gone that mother be-  
gan to fret and worry and I said that we'd  
go after you. She's outside. Don't go!  
I'll get her." And she was out and back  
again before I could do anything.

"A crazy man," I whispered, and gave  
them a chance to peep. All three were  
watching the man's work, when, with a  
heavy sigh, he raised his head, moved to-  
ward the front door and thence out upon  
the little porch. There he was choking and  
gasping noises at my side and somebody  
clutched at my arm and hung on it heavily.  
It was for a moment only, for the pressure  
was instantly lightened and mother's voice  
said:

"John! John! That man is David! I'm  
sure of it. Let me get to him!" And the  
frail little woman actually struggled to  
get up, and would have been thrown back  
if I had not clapped my hand over her  
mouth.

"Hush! Be calm!" I said. "It is well  
to be certain before we act."

"John, there's the table set just as it  
was set the night he disappeared and in  
the same room. And this is the anni-  
versary night. Please let me in, John."

"Yes, mother, if you and ToINETTE will  
do just as I wish, for I had a plan in my  
mind to test the matter. This being agreed  
upon and the heavy tramp of the man still  
sounding upon the porch, I almost carried  
the two women from where we stood to  
the vacant chairs, into which they dropped  
in a half faint. As I turned away I lower-  
ed the wick of the small lamp so that dis-  
covery would not be immediate. The wait-  
ing was a long one—intolerable to the two  
weak creatures in their agonies of doubt  
and hope. Once mother gave a weak, hy-  
sterical cry, but smothered it immediately.  
ToINETTE was all of a tremble from cold  
and nervousness. At last the man came  
grooping into the room, confused by his  
darkness.

"Repentance is useless," I heard him say. "I shall come no more.  
God is not merciful to an old man like  
me. I have not the purpose or the will to  
keep on hoping. Eh! What's this?"

His hand was so shaky as he leaned for-  
ward over the table to turn up the wick of  
the lamp that he fumbled blindly for the  
screw and finally had to pull the light to-  
ward him. With a full blaze on, he placed  
it heavily upon the table close to the two  
waiting women, and still leaning forward  
stared in their faces as if fascinated. They  
also were spellbound, and mother as white  
as ToINETTE was, as she afterward  
confessed, frightened. The man, she said,  
"seemed to be stabbing her with looks  
from his eyes." Would he never be done  
with that greedy stare?

Twice he raised a hand from the table  
and put it to his forehead as if dazed. A  
noise in his throat showed that he was  
trying to cry aloud as if he were in the  
agonies of an insupportable dream. The  
test was a cruel one, but it did not last  
long, perhaps a minute, though it seemed  
a score of years.

"Mother! ToINETTE!" The man fairly  
shrieked the names. Their arms went out  
to embrace him.

"Alive and in this place tonight of all  
nights!" he cried. "God be praised!"  
He was standing erect as he spoke, his  
clashed hands raised high toward heaven,  
his face upturned. "My penance is ended,"  
he said to himself, and began to sway  
and clutch at the air and to fall as a great  
tree falls.

Into my arms descended David Vance,  
like one tired out with hard labor. In the  
lap of the little mother I laid a great  
gray head that had, like hers, lived on  
hope so many years. The daughter's hands  
came, like bracelets of love, upon her fa-  
ther's wrists. Thus he rested until con-  
sciousness came back and his opened eyes  
saw the loves of his old life, glorified  
through many tribulations.

At last, after 11 long years of such spiri-  
tual torture as befalls few people, the  
broken threads of his family life were once  
more in the hands of David Vance. He  
said so, with an indescribable pathos of  
look and voice, at the reunion supper that  
same night at the Westmoreland after the  
bewildered Frank had been added to the  
party.

"Not until tonight did I lose hope," re-  
marked the old gentleman. "I can't give  
any reason for not surrendering to what  
seemed a certainty. Wherever I was, in  
the mines or in great cities, there was al-  
ways within me a spirital confidence that  
some if not all of us would meet  
again. Tonight for the first time I de-  
paired, and yet"—hesitating for a second  
and looking around the table with the elo-  
quence of undying affection in every line  
of his noble face—"and yet, see we're  
here, all of us, alive and full of cheerfulness,  
as if there'd been no storm."

"Thanks for this to John's curiosity,"  
murmured Mrs. Vance from under her  
arm.

"Thanks to little mother's restlessness,  
that was always expecting something,"  
said I.

"Thanks to the good Lord, above all  
else," said Mr. Vance slowly and solemn-  
ly, as if it were a prayer.—Chicago Post.

### Christmas Trees in England.

Christmas trees were unknown in Eng-  
land until the reign of Queen Victoria.  
After the present Prince of Wales had be-  
come 3 or 4 years old Prince Albert orna-  
mented a Christmas tree for the amusement  
of the infant prince. The idea pleased the  
people, and as Christmas trees were every  
year made a feature of the court celebra-  
tion the fashion soon spread among the  
English.—Exchange.

### Chime on Sweet Bells!

Oh, sweet bells on the glistering fields  
The Christmas carols play,  
And joyously each loving heart  
Doth greet this holiday.

Now "Peace on earth, good will to men!"  
Is pealing through the air  
While heaven with kindness overflows  
And rest replaces care.

"Behold the Christ child, newly born!"  
Resounds the glad refrain,  
And every soul that hears the song,  
Christlike, is born again.

Chime on, sweet bells, till round the world  
The message shall be borne  
And men of every clime shall know  
The peace of Christmas morn.—Keyes Book.

## THE CHRISTMAS TREE

### A REMINDER OF THE CUSTOMS OF REMOTE AGES.

Carried in Procession at the Midwinter  
Festival of the Celts Before the Time  
of Christ—Yule Log Among the Ger-  
mans—First Christmas Tree in America.

Among these queer relics of a great an-  
tiquity is the Christmas tree. The very  
name of this object, familiar as it is at  
Christmas time, indicates a Christian  
origin, but there is no doubt whatever  
that the customs connected with the  
Christmas tree, together with the tree it-  
self, were a part of the Druidical religion  
perhaps thousands of years before our era.  
The Druid religion was a curious combi-  
nation of nature, sun and fire worship.  
Nature was adored in the oak, which, in  
north Europe, was the sturdiest, largest  
and strongest member of the plant world.  
The sun was worshipped because it gave  
light and heat and brought life to all the  
world. Fire was worshipped because it was  
not only the warming and comforting ele-  
ment, but also, when unbridled, a demon  
to be dreaded. Thus, the Druidical cer-  
emonies and worship comprised a combina-  
tion of rites, some undoubtedly borrowed  
from the far east, others a growth of the  
climate and country which the peoples de-  
voted to this form of religion inhabited.  
The great festival of the year was at the  
midwinter season, when the sun, after  
sinking low in the southern skies, began  
to return toward the north and to bring  
with it renewed life to the northern hemi-  
sphere. The date was, approximately,  
about the time of our Christmas, the third  
or fourth week in December. At the be-  
ginning of the last week in the last month  
the sun is at its lowest point and from  
that time the days begin to lengthen and,  
little by little, the ice king loosens his grip  
and retires to his own regions in the north.  
Then begin the rejoicings at the sun's re-  
turn. In Italy the festival took the name  
of the Saturnalia, a season of the wildest  
license.

Long before the time of Christ, among  
the Celts of France, England and the Brit-  
ish islands, at the midwinter festival a tree  
decorated with life of gay cloth and bright  
polished metal was carried in procession.  
Generally it was an oak, but whatever its  
species it was honored as a symbol and  
was set up in the Druidical circles, portions  
of which still remain at Stonehenge and  
many other parts of Great Britain and Ire-  
land, and was adored as a symbol of life,  
and finally consigned to the flames, a huge  
pile of wood being placed around it and  
set on fire. Where there was a round tower,  
the tree was burned in this artificial  
furnace, but otherwise the great bonfire  
was the center of attraction, and around  
its glowing flames the people capered and  
rejoiced.

When the usage spread to Germany it  
was not known. Indeed it is possible that  
Druidism may have originated in Ger-  
many and spread thence to the Celts of  
France and the Britons of England. There  
is good reason to believe, however, that  
at the beginning of the Christian era Druid-  
ical worship was firmly established  
throughout Germany, and that the Christ-  
mas tree, under another name, flourished  
for a long distance east of the Rhine. Did  
we know nothing of the German worship  
from other sources, the occasional hints  
and allusions by early Roman authors give  
satisfactory evidence that tree and fire  
worship prevailed, and the midwinter festi-  
val tree was therefore honored from the  
most northern Scottish islands to the Ri-  
viera of France and from Finisterre to the  
great plains of central Russia.

Long, however, after the Christian era  
began the yule tree, or yule log, remained  
an institution among the Germanic tribes.  
As already stated, the midwinter tree was  
burned at the conclusion of the festival,  
and a trace of this ceremony is still seen  
in the yule log, which, in country districts  
of England, is dragged in by half a dozen  
sturdy yokels and thrown back of the  
hearth to furnish a basis for the winter's  
fire. The ashes and charred coals of the  
midwinter tree were formerly gathered to  
use in incantations, being deemed to pos-  
sess supernatural qualities, and even in  
this century bits of charcoal from the yule  
log are treasured by English country girls  
and boys on account of some superstitious  
fancies connected with these bits of sacred  
wood.

The midwinter tree, modified from its  
pagan uses, therefore became the Christ-  
mas tree, and even in its ornaments and  
decorations may be found a symbolism not  
so deeply hidden that it can not be easily  
detected. The linked chains of gift paper  
were once so many emblems of eternity.  
The glass globes and gilded balls were  
emblems of the sun and moon. The little  
cake images were once figures of the saints,  
more anciently still were little idols fash-  
ioned of wheat dough and baked hard in  
an oven. The tiny candles, without  
which no Christmas tree could be a Christ-  
mas tree, are a reminiscence of the days  
when every sun and fire worshiper carried  
with him to the great annual festival his  
torch or candle, and when the sacred fire  
was lighted.

As the round tower or on the altar  
of the Druids, the light was passed from  
torch to torch until the entire circle was  
ablaze. In court, in camp and in  
cloister in Germany, France and Italy the  
Christmas tree was an institution for hun-  
dreds upon hundreds of years. When  
Gaeta was besieged in the fourteenth cen-  
tury by the troops of various petty Italian  
states, with a contingent from the im-  
perial army, Christmas came on ere the  
surrendered, and the besiegers cele-  
brated the festival with half a dozen  
Christmas trees in their camp and mocked  
at the besieged, who could get no trees to  
honor the day.

Strange as it may appear, the midwinter  
tree was forgotten in England, where it  
had once flourished as a most prominent  
part of the annual festival, and from the  
close of the thirteenth century, after the  
subjugation of Wales by Edward I, the cus-  
tom seems to have been ignored, save in  
remote country districts and among the  
humble classes of working people. It  
was revived in our own times by Albert,  
the prince consort, who, on the fourth or  
fifth birthday of the Prince of Wales, con-  
ceived the idea of entertaining the little  
royal highness with a German tree, so had  
one prepared. In England whatever roy-  
alty does is the proper thing for everybody  
else to do, so on the following Christmas  
the nobility and gentry all had Christmas  
trees, and now the institution is insepara-  
ble from the season. The tree most com-  
monly used in England is the holly or holly  
tree, so called because, producing its ber-  
ries toward the Christmas season and re-  
maining green throughout the winter, it is,  
in popular superstition, associated with  
the greatest of Christmas festivals.

The first Christmas tree in America was  
decorated and lighted up in New Amer-  
sterdam when Manhattan Island was a colony

of the Dutch. The honest Dutchmen, even  
in the new world, could not forget the  
pleasant associations connected with the  
season, and it is recorded that on the first  
Christmas passed by the Dutch colonists  
on this side the Atlantic they cut down a  
cedar, took it into the church, and, with  
such means as were at hand, decorated and  
lighted it, hanging upon its branches pre-  
sents from the governor and his lady to  
every member of the colony. The tree was  
never in favor among the Puritans of New  
England, however, until after the begin-  
ning of the present century. They imag-  
ined that in some way not very clear to  
their own minds it savored of papacy, and  
that for that was enough to cause its re-  
jection.

The Christmas tree is thus more than a  
fanciful reminder of the day and season.  
It is an historical institution recalling cus-  
toms which years ago became obsolete and  
a religion which has been dead for many  
centuries. It is a beautiful token of the  
season and a reminiscence of ages so re-  
mote as to have left no written trace.  
There is no danger that the world will for-  
get or ignore it. An institution which can  
last for 30 centuries at least is proba-  
bly good for 30 more.—St. Louis Globe-  
Democrat.

### THE JULEBOKER.

Peccolus Scandinavian Christmas Eve cus-  
tom.

A custom that is very common in Swe-  
den and Norway in connection with Christ-  
mas eve is to "gaa julebok." This custom  
undoubtedly has its origin in a supersti-  
tion that held sway shortly after the ad-  
vent of Christianity. This was that on  
Christmas eve dark spirits wandered about  
trying to exert their influences. Later, as  
the people became more intelligent, this  
superstition was transformed into the hu-  
morous. In some respects it is like the  
American Halloween. All the pranks are  
done masked. The ingenuity is taxed to  
invent something as grotesque as possible.  
The "juleboker" often come in pairs. He  
is always expected, and something has  
generally been prepared for him. He  
knocks on the door and then enters. He  
has nothing to say, only patiently waits  
for something in the way of liquor. When  
he receives this, he leaves, but if noth-  
ing is given him he becomes ugly, and  
trouble may result. In this way he prowls  
about from house to house until he finally  
becomes rather unsteady on his feet. Then  
he goes home.

In the cities these features do not exist.  
It is largely a children's festival there.  
At no other time of the year do the older  
people try to become young again as now.  
Preparations have been made far ahead,  
and old and young are expectantly look-  
ing forward to Christmas. Many keep up  
the celebrations to Jan. 30, but it is not as  
general as in the country. Christmas  
trees are prepared and presents given  
away. The children gather at different  
homes on different evenings, light the can-  
dles on the merry tree, sing and dance,  
while the old look longingly on, wishing  
themselves again back in childhood's mer-  
ry days.—Minneapolis Tribune.

### THE MISTLETOE.

A Parasite That Draws Sustenance From  
the Tree to Which It Clings.

The modern mistletoe, as we know it to-  
day, in its present highly evolved and de-  
generate state as a confirmed parasite is no  
longer an enigma. It is a woody shrub,  
with yellow green leaves, which specially  
affects the boughs of apple trees, pears and  
poplars. The people who get their ideas  
vaguely and secondhand from books have  
a notion that the mistletoe's favorite haunts  
is the British oak. This is a complete  
mistake, as it was the very rarity of the  
mistletoe on oaks that gave one, when  
found there, its peculiar sanctity in the  
eyes of the primitive peoples.

In the purely wild condition mistletoe  
grows mostly on poplars alone. In civil-  
ized and cultivated soils it extends its de-  
pravations wherever it gets a chance, to  
apple orchards and pear trees. And this is  
manner of the generation of mistletoes.  
The young seedling sprouts on a branch of  
its involuntary host, where seeds have been  
carried by birds.

Instead of rooting themselves, however  
like mere groundling plants, by small  
fibrous rootlets, they fasten by a sort of  
suckerlike fashion to the tissues of the tree  
on which they feed, and penetrating its  
bark to the living layer just beneath, suck  
up elaborated sap from the veins of their  
victim. Thus they live at the expense of  
the poplar, whose food they appropriate,  
and when many of them together infest a  
single tree, as one may often see in the  
long roadside avenues of central France,  
they succeed in largely choking the foliage  
of their unhappy host.—Cincinnati En-  
quirer.

### How to Carve the Christmas Goose.

Place it on the platter with the head at  
the left. Insert the fork firmly across the  
ridge of the breastbone. Begin at the  
wing and cut down through the meat to  
the bone the whole length of the breast.  
Cut down in the same way in parallel  
slices, as thin as can be cut, until you  
come to the ridge of the breastbone. Slip  
the knife under the meat at the end of the  
breast and remove the slices from the  
bone. Cut in the same manner on the op-  
posite side of the breast. Cut through the  
skin below the breast, insert a spoon and  
help to the stuffing. If more be required,  
cut the wing off at the joint. Then tip  
the body over slightly and cut off the leg.  
This joint is tougher and requires  
more skill in separating than the second  
joint of a turkey. It lies nearer the back-  
bone, but practice and familiarity with its  
location will enable one to strike it accu-  
rately. The wishbone, shoulder blade and  
collar bone may be removed according to  
the directions given for carving roast tur-  
key. Some prefer to remove the wing and  
leg before slicing the breast.—Exchange.

### Christmas Bells.

I heard the bells on Christmas day  
Their old, familiar carols play,  
And wild and sweet  
The words repeat.

Of peace on earth, good will to men!  
And thought how, as the day had come,  
The bell-ringers of Christendom  
Had rolled along.